

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1842

INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMCONSUL PORT SAID

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 4727

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT EG

SUBJ: GOE ENCOURAGES MUSLIM RIGHT

SUMMARY: GOE'S UNANNOUNCED CAMPAIGN TO COBAT LEFTIST
AGITATION BY ENCOURAGING RIGHTIST MUSLIM ELEMENTS MAY BE WORKING
MUSLIM ACTIVITIES HAVE INCREASED AND LEFTIST RALLIES
HAVE FAILED ATTRACT MUCH ATTENTION. IN VIEW CONSERVATIVE NATURE
EGYPTIAN SOCIETY, CALL FOR RETURN TO ISLAMIC VALUES IS TWO -EDGED
SWORD RISKING AN INCREASE OF PUBLIC QUESTIONING OF SECULARIST
ASPECTS SADAT'S OPEN DOOR. NASSERISTS NOW SEEK WOO MUSLIMS,
BUT GOE CLAIMS SECURITY SITUATION UNDER CONTROL. END SUMMARY

1. LAST OCTOBER HIGHER ISLAMIC COUNCIL DIRECTOR TAWFIQ
UQAYDA, WHITH WHOM EMBASSY HAD HAD NO PREVIOUS CONTACT, ASKED
EMBOFF TO CALL ON HIM. AT THAT TIME UWAYDA EXPLIANED THAT GOE
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HAD DECIDED TO FINANCE AND ORGANIZE RIGHTIST GROUPS ON
EGYPTIAN CAMPUSES TO STAND UP TO NASSERITST AND MARXIST
AGITATION. UWAYDA SAID THAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE BROUGHT
TO THEIR SENSES NOT BE THE SECURITY FORCES AS HAD OCCURED

IN JANUARY 1975, BUT BY DIALOGUE WITH YOUNG COLLEAGUES WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED AND ENCOURAGED IN ISLAMIC BELIEFS. THIS SCHEME, HE WAS SURE, WOULD WORK, BECAUSE EGYPT IS DEEPLY RELIGIOUS COUNTRY, MOST STUDENTS ARE POLITICALLY APATHETIC IN ANY CASE, AND VAST MAJORITY ARE PRO-SADAT.

2. IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT GOE SCENARIO IS IN FULL SWING AND, JUDGING BY RELATIVE RALLIES AND SOME MARCHES THIS SEMESTER BUT THE ISSUES HAVE BEEN STUDENT COMPLAINTS AGAINST SPECIFIC UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS AND CONDITIONS. LEFTIST AGITATORS HAVE BEEN SPOTTED CARRYING SIGNS DENOUNCING HIGH COST OF LIVING, BUT LEFT HAS BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN ITS CAMPUS EFFORTS.

3. FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AT U OF CAIRO, TRADITIONALLY AN ACTIVIST LEFTIST GROUP, PROVIDES GOOD EXAMPLE OF GOE EFFORT. MILLIONAIRE MINRECONSTRUCTION OSMAN, CITING HIS OWN ENGINEERING BACKGROUND, HAS BEEN REPORTEDLY POURING MONEY INTO THE FACULTY. UWAYDA ARRANGED JUST LAST WEEK FOR DISTRIBUTION OF HUNDREDS OF CUT RATE BOOKS ON ISLAM AT CAIRO UNIVERSITY AND ESPECIALLY IN ENGINEERING FACULTY. LECTURES HAVE BEEN CALLED IN TO SPEAK TO STUDENTS; ONE CAME FROM RIYADH, ANOTHER IS FORMALLY EXILED MUSLIM BROTHER. THERE ARE OCCASIONAL KORANIC READING SESSIONS IN THE FACULTY NOW. WHEN ENGINEERING FACULTY'S WEEKLY NEWSPAPER WAS SUSPENDED (ALLEGEDLY BECAUSE ITS EDITOR IS NEITHER STUDENT NOR JOURNALIST), ENGINEERS DID NOT DEMONSTRATE AT ALL. NEWSPAPER WAS REALLY CLOSED BECAUSE OF INFLAMMATORY INTERVIEWS AND ARTICLES WHICH IT HAD CARRIED, INCLUDING TWO INSTALLMENTS OF LONG INTERVIEW WITH HAYKAL (CAIRO 4398).

4. GOE'S EFFORTS ARE NOT CONFINED TO CAMPUS. ISLAMIC MONTHLY AL 'ITISAM IS PREMITEED TO ADVOCATE EXTERMIST ISLAMIC POSITIONS, SUCH AS WARNING AGAINST CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN MUSLIM WORLD AND EGYPT IN PARTICULAR. RELIGIOUS PAGES OF DAILIES ARE SIMILARLY OUTSPOKEN. TELEVISION STATIONS BROADCAST COMMENTARIES CALLING FOR RETURN TO ISLAM. ONE EGYPTIAN LADY FROM MIDDLE CLASS FAMILY OFTEN APPEARS WRAPPED IN BLACK EXPLAINING " CONFIDENTIAL

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PROPER" ROLE OF MUSLIM WOMEN A LA MUHAMMAD ABD AL-WAHAB.

5. THIS GOE-ORCHESTRATED CALL FOR RETURN TO ISLAMIC VALUES IS OBVIOUSLY TWO-EDGED SWORD. ANY BACK-TO-THE-MOSQUE MOVEMENT IN THIS CONSERVATIVE SOCIETY RISKS GROWING PUBLIC DENUNCIATION OF SECULARIST ASPECTS OF SADAT'S SOCIAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC OPEN DOOR. MOST EGYPTIANS IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS MUSLIMS FIRST AND FOREMOST AND WOULD PREFER TO DEAL WITH CHRISTIAN WEST RATHER THAN ATHEIST EAST, BUT CONSERVATIVE EGYPTIANS FEAR CULTURAL INUNDATION FROM SADAT'S TURN TO THE WEST. SPECIFICALLY, OLD CRY FOR STRICT ISLAMIC STATE, WHICH 1971 CONSTITUTION RULED OUT BY CALLING ISLAMIC LAW "A" (VICE "THE") MAIN SOURCE OF

LEGISLATION, IS BEING STRONGLY REVIVED BY AZHAR. FOR YEARS THERE HAVE BEEN DRAFT BILLS INTRODUCED TO EGYPTIAN PARLIAMENTS BANNING LIQUOR AND THE LIKE, BUT SINCE SADAT'S PRESIDENCY THERE HAS NEVER BEEN SUCH A PUBLIC DEMAND FOR A RETURN TO ISLAMIC LAW.

6. AS WE HAVE REPORTED MANY TIMES, WHAT GOE FEARS MOST IS A TACTICAL CONVERGENCE OF THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT AGAINST IT. WE HAVE HEARD IN PAST SOME INDICATIONS THAT LEFTISTS WERE TRYING TO PROMOTE THIS, BUT EVEN SADAT HAD NO CONFIRMATORY EVIDENCE OF A STRONG MOVEMENT AFOOT. NOW, HOWEVER, GOE ITSELF HAS WARNED AGAINST SUCH MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE. SPEAKER MARI WAS REPORTED IN PRESS APRIL 7 AS HAVING SAID THAT SIX COMMUNIST STUDENTS FROM AIN SHAMS UNIVERSITY HAD GONE TO AL-AZHAR TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO MARCH ON PEOPLE ASSEMBLY DEMANDING ABROGATION OF CONSTITUTION IN FAVOR ISLAMIC SHARI'A. MARI WARNED THAT SOVIET SYMPATHIZERS NOW ENDEAVOR ACHIEVE THEIR ENDS BY PLAYING NOT JUST ON ECONOMIC PROBLEMS BUT ALSO ON "RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS".

ANOTHER STRAW IN WIND IS FACT THAT AL-TULLAB , (WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF EGYPTIAN STUDENT FEDERATION), KNOWN FOR ITS LEFTIST VIEWS, HAS ARTICLE THIS WEEK URGING RETURN TO SHARI'A.

7. COMMENT: IN SEPTEL WE REPORTED PRIMIN SALIM'S VIEW THAT SECURITY SITUATION IS WELL UNDER CONTROL. CITING EXAMPLES, HOWEVER, HE DISCUSSED ONLY THE LEFT. WE ASSUME THIS IS BECAUSE GOE IS USING THE RIGHT AS A TOOL FOR DOMESTIC MANAGEMENT. IN OUR VIEW, THE CURE COULD TURN TO BE WORSE THAN THE DISEASE.
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8. ISLAM APPEALS TO ALMOST EVERY EGYPTIAN. SINCE MARXISM APPEALS TO A VERY FEW, WE ASSUME THAT THE NASSERISTS ARE THE CHIEF TARGET OF THIS GOE ENCOURAGEMENT OF RIGHTIST REJUVENATION. IT IS DISTURBING, HOWEVER, THAT GOE SEEMS TO BE PROVIDING MONEY AND ENCOURAGEMENT WITHOUT MUCH THOUGHT FOR THE FUTURE. SAUDI EMBOOD TELLS US THAT EVEN UWAYDA, WHO IS IN CHARGE OF YOUTH SECTION OF GOE'S EFFORTS, IS SOMEWHAT AT A LOSS AS TO HOW TO DISCIPLINE HIS MUSLIM CHARGES. SAUDIS ARE PREPARED TO FINANCE ANY SCHEME FOR ORGANIZATION WHICH SEEMS TO THEM REASONABLE, BUT THEY WORRY THAT UWAYDA IS STILL PROFESSING HIMSELF UNABLE TO DECIDE ON EXACTLY WHAT ORGANIZATIONAL APPROACH TO TAKE. SAUDI EMBASSY DIVIDES MUSLIM RIGHT INTO THREE GROUPS: OLD-LINE IKHWAN, NOW FOR THE MOST PART EXILED OR DISCREDITED; 30-40 YEAR OLD INTELLECTUALS, MOST OF WHOM ARE PREPARED WORK WITHIN THE SYSTEM; LARGE NUMBERS OF YOUNG INTELLECTUALLY UNDISCIPLINED MUSLIMS , WHO MUST BE "GUIDED". THIS LATTER GROUP, WE SHOULD STRESS, IS NOT DRAWN SOLELY FROM ROOTLESS URBAN PROLETARIAN. ABDULLAH SARIYYA'S SUCCESS IN RECRUITING IN MOSQUES FOR ATTACK ON MILITARY TECHNICAL ACADEMY TWO YEARS AGO PROVED THAT MIDDLE CLASS YOUTHS ARE ALSO SUCEPTIBLE TO TRADITIONAL METHODS OF IKHWAN RECRUITMENT.

9. GOE HAS EMBARKED ON ITS EFFORT MOBILIZE MUSLIM FEELING WITH ITS EYES OPEN. ALL ADULT EGYPTIANS REMEMBER WELL THAT IKHWAN BECAME PERHAPS THE MOST POWERFUL DISCRETE ELEMENT IN EGYPTIAN POLITICS IN THE 1940S AND 1950S AND THAT IT WAS THE IKHWAN WHO TRIED TO ASSASSINATE NASSER. NEVERTHELESS, EVEN THE SAUDIS ARE BEGINNING TO BE WORRIED THAT GOE HAS OPENED A PANDORA'S BOX OF GUT ISSUES WHICH MAY BE DIFFICULT TO CONTROL. SAUDIS ALSO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT GOE IS SINCERELY SEEKING COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO DISCIPLINING THAT CONTROLLING THE RIGHT. EILTS

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